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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8383  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 001564

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/03/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: RUSSIA ON KOSOVO/EULEX; BOSNIA PIC  
  
REF: USMISSION USUN 450

Classified By: Political M/C Alice G. Wells: Reasons 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a June 3 meeting, Russian Special Envoy for Kosovo Botsan-Kharchenko noted "immediate and serious" concerns with UNSYG Ban Ki-Moon's proposal to Belgrade regarding EULEX, with an MFA statement highlighting FM Lavrov's June 2 telephone conversation with Ban underscoring the need to adhere to UNSCR 1244 and find a solution acceptable to both Belgrade and Pristina. Botsan-Kharchenko maintained that the Security Council must make the final decision, but Russia was focused on EULEX remaining a pillar within UNMIK. Belgrade's approval as "host country" was essential, and Russia judged EU nations sought a cooperative arrangement between the UN and Belgrade. Botsan-Kharchenko warned of potential trouble around June 15, and stressed Serbia's refusal to link agreement to an international civilian presence with a Kosovo constitution that it rejects. On Bosnia, Russia will push for "more clear hints" about the OHR end-game at the June 24-25 PIC, in recognition of perceived improvements on the ground. End Summary

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Continued Sharp Differences Over EULEX  
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¶2. (C) In a June 3 meeting, Russian Special Envoy for Kosovo Aleksandr Botsan-Kharchenko underscored the sharp differences in U.S. and Russian policy approaches, as the June 15 date for Kosovo's constitution to come into effect neared. While Russia believed a continued international presence in Kosovo was essential, Botsan-Kharchenko said Moscow had "immediate and serious" concerns with UNSYG Moon's proposal to Belgrade over the reconfiguration of UNMIK and expansion of EULEX. The SYG's letter, Botsan-Kharchenko complained, made it sound as if Ban Ki-Moon had "full competence" to determine the transition on his own, whereas Russia believed that the UNSC must take an "appropriate decision," in dialogue with the Secretary General.

¶3. (C) While Russia recognized the role of the EU, and supported its expanded contribution in Kosovo, Moscow insists that EULEX be a pillar within the UNMIK mission. The Russian position, he reiterated, turned on Belgrade's stance. The current UNSYG Ban draft was unacceptable to Belgrade, and Russia would continue to stipulate that the Secretary General acquire the consent of the Serbs, as the "host country." Russia actively supported a resumed dialogue between Belgrade and the UN. When pressed on UNMIK's scope of operations, Botsan-Kharchenko said that Russia did not oppose a reduction in UNMIK staffing per se, nor did it have a schematic for a division of labor between the two operations. What was important was an agreement on the "political conception" of the changes underway. While the U.S. wanted "UNMIK-lite," Russia wanted EULEX grounded within a continued UNMIK framework. "All depends on Belgrade," Botsan-Kharchenko asserted, with Serbian leaders vigorously opposing four of the five technical points broached by Ban.

¶4. (U) On June 3, the MFA issued a statement on FM Lavrov's

June 2 telephone conversation with the UNSYG over the "unsanctioned" European mission. According to the statement, Lavrov emphasized that Ban was obligated to UNSCR 1244 and not deviate from its principles, while continuing contacts with all interested parties to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the situation. Lavrov reviewed Russia's "principled position," reiterated that Russia would support any outcome acceptable to both Pristina and Belgrade, and renewed the call for UN-led negotiations.

15. (C) According to Botsan-Kharchenko, Russia's European partners continued to tell Moscow that they sought a cooperative arrangement between Belgrade and the UNSC, and were comfortable with a continued UNMIK presence. Internal EU discomfort over the EULEX mission, Botsan-Kharchenko asserted, would prevent any effort to deploy EULEX as an independent operation, without UNSC cover.

16. (C) Botsan-Kharchenko grudgingly acknowledged that Russia "took note" of the absence of violence in Kosovo, but took issue with the notion that Kosovo was stable. Predicting that there could be problems around June 15, Botsan-Kharchenko stressed that the Serbs will refuse to draw any linkage between an agreement on an international civilian presence and the Kosovo constitution. The effort to avoid this symbolism and the energy being expended on negotiations over the formation of a new government would limit Serb engagement. Botsan-Kharchenko warned against mistaking a Tadic government (which, in Russia's view, was not a given), with a change in Belgrade's approach to Kosovo. While Tadic is a more flexible negotiator in terms of style, on substance Belgrade will be unified in not recognizing the European

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mission without a UNSCR cover.

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Bosnia PIC: Tabling an End-Date  
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17. (C) Botsan-Kharchenko raised the June 24-25 Bosnia Peace Implementation Council meeting, noting that while some partners continued to focus on danger signs, Russia believed it was time to send "more clear hints" about the OHR end-game. The June PIC, he argued, should make a preliminary -- if not final -- decision on OHR's closure. Russia intended to put the question of the end-date on the table, while recognizing that the U.S. would not support a date certain. A satisfactory outcome could be an oral agreement among PIC members, but the PIC should "demonstrate serious consideration" of OHR's closure and transition to an EU-lead. To state that transition was a "strategic goal" was no longer satisfactory.

18. (C) Botsan-Kharchenko downplayed our strong concerns over RS PM Dodik's statements questioning the "imposed state" in Bosnia, arguing that the occasional populist rhetoric was to be expected, but that specific actions -- such as agreement on police reform -- were positive. Botsan-Kharchenko alluded to constructive Dodik statements, reflecting his acknowledgment that RS was grounded in Bosnia; "Dayton is not in question." While Russia had gone along with the February consensus that the situation was too uncertain to embrace transition, it expected the "more or less calm" situation on the ground to now produce a more concrete PIC determination of when OHR would wind down.

RUSSELL